

Open News - Taranaki Open Fours

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Tower's title after thrilling final goes to overtime

Bruce Phillips has skipped his Tower side to victory in an enthralling final of the Taranaki men's Open fours at Paritutu on Sunday evening.

Phillips and his team of Mark Kuklinski, John Roberts and Scott Roberts took the overall honours in the week-long tournament when they beat a West End side skipped by Craig De Faria 22-20 in the decider, that didn't finish until 7.30pm.

The first all-Taranaki final since 2006 could not have been closer, with the two teams inseparable after the regulation 25 ends at 17-all.

But the Phillips side took the game 5-3 on the five extra ends that were required to find the winner. It was a valiant attempt by De Faria and his quartet of Jordan Linn, Dave Wilson and Steve Walker who, after winning in 2019, were endeavouring to become just the fifth side in the 115 year history of the event to win it back-to-back.

In the final, all eight players had some good shot and some mediocre ones, with an inconsistent cross wind making play scrappy at times.

Although De Faria led for the majority of the game, the largest margin was only five shots after 10 ends.

Tower gradually narrowed the deficit, squaring the ledger after 15 ends.

A two on the next gave De Faria a slight advantage which West End looked to add to on the 17th head. They held three, but Phillips drew the shot. For the remainder of the regulation ends, only one shot separated the teams.

De Faria led by one playing the 25th end. John Roberts drew a beauty, and with Wilson close by, Tower took one to force the game into overtime.

On the first extra end, Phillips drew the shot when two down. The second extra end was a



Tower's John Roberts, Mark Kuklinski, Scott Roberts and Bruce Phillips — 2020 champions.

tie, with umpire David Brunton unable to separate the two closest bowls after excellent deliveries from both skips.

But the third extra end, which was nearly full length, was the clincher. Tower took a four with West End astray. West End replied with a single and, after two kills, a brace, but it was Tower's title.

There were extra celebrations for John Roberts, who became the second player in history to win 25 Taranaki titles. Phillips also brought up a milestone with 20, while Scott Roberts now has four and Kuklinski three.

It is the first Open fours title won by the Tower club, which was initially an amalgamation of the Hawera and Nolandown clubs. Alton joined the fold 18 months ago.

Alton last won the Open in 2013 — a side that included both John Roberts and Phillips — Nolandown triumphed in 2003, but the original Hawera club last won the holy grail in 1950.

Contrasting semifinals saw last visitors exit

The morning semifinals were contrasting affairs.

Bruce Phillips prevailed 27-15 over the Halswell side of Darryl Hawker, Lawrence Quek, Kevan Greenwood and skip Paul Matheson.

Matheson quickly found his weight in the game and after four ends the mainlanders led 7-0. However, assisted by a three and a four, Phillips' side trailed just 9-10 after 10 ends at the interval.

While they were a little fortunate to be so close, the Tower side lifted the performance over the next few ends, leading 16-11.

Matheson offered some retort, closing to 16-15 behind after 18 ends. However a four and a three on the next two ends put Phillips back in control, with Matheson not adding to his score.

In the other semi, Craig De Faria was in complete control throughout his match with Dennis Brewster's Whangarei quartet of Donald Cameron, Steve Mitchell and Bart Robertson. Brewster started with a two, but his next scor-

ing end was the 12th, by which time De Faria had raced to 19 shots. A four on the next end made it 23-3 to De Faria, with the official scorecard reading 25-6 at the conclusion.



Dave Wilson, Jordan Linn, Steve Walker and Craig De Faria, gallant and gracious in defeat, with Taranaki president, Ian Andrews.

Pairs title to Papakura's Newton and Dix

The New Plymouth Club-sponsored Open pairs event was won by Papakura's Glenn Newton and Brody Dix when they defeated Te Kuiti's Mark Tulip and Colin Young 19-12 in the final at Paritutu on Sunday.

The Te Kuiti pair held the advantage for the first half of the final, but the Papakura pair called the tune in the second half to win.

In the semifinals, Tulip and Young beat Gary Barber (Paritutu) and Paddy Deegan (Opunake) 24-16. The composite duo led 7-0 after five ends, but five ends later Te Kuiti were in front 12-7. They extended that to 18-9 after 14, but Barber and Deegan closed again to 18-16. However, Tulip and Young won the remaining ends to ensure victory.

In the other semi, Newton and Dix defeated Wanaka's Tom Malcolm and Richie Muir 20-15. Newton and Dix went on a mid-game scoring spree, going from 7-6 behind after nine ends to 16-8 in front. The Otago Central pair

fought back to 18-15 behind after 19 ends. However, the Papakura pair took singles on the last two ends.



Papakura's Brody Dix and Glenn Newton.

